

A

REVIEW

OF THE

Affairs of *FRANCE*:

With Observations on TRANSACTIONS at Home.

Saturday, November 17. 1705.

I Have observ'd that those People, who having been silenc'd in the Out-cry rais'd about the Churches Danger, by her Majesty's most Gracious Speech, and who for a time had no more to say, begin to open upon that Head again, from a Cavil they raise at a Clause in the Address of the House of Commons; so willing are sinking Disputants to lay hold of the least Twig to buoy up a Drowning Cause.

The words of the Address are thus: *We cannot without Indignation reflect, That there should be any so Malicious as to Insinuate, That the Church of England, as by Law Established, is or ever can be in Danger for Want of your Majesty's Care and Zeal to Support and Maintain it.*

From whence these worthy Gentlemen infer, That tho' the Church cannot be in any Danger from any want of her Majesty's Care and Zeal, yet the Church may be in Danger from the *Dissenters*, who, say they, are daily encroaching upon us, and may in time overturn both Church and State, as

once they did, *and what has been, may be*; and thus they think they are authorized still to possess their Hearers with Apprehensions of the Churches Danger.

Now as her Majesty has however gain'd one Point, *viz.* That the Church is not in any Danger from the want of Care and Zeal on her Majesty, which they cannot now without Blushes pretend to.

Give this Paper leave, my Lords and Reverend Fathers of the Convocation, to attempt to clear up the other part of the matter, and to prove that in the nature of the thing it cannot be so.

I shall begin to argue this from a Slimly, which, tho' it differs in one single Circumstance, will exactly Chime in all the rest.

The City of *Hamburg* is a Free Imperial City, Rich and Powerful, and absolutely independent of all the Powers it is environ'd with; subjected to no Government but that of its own Senate, some small Engagements to the Imperial Constitutions excepted. It has for its too powerful Neighbours

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and

and no extraordinary Friends, the *Dane*, the *Swede*, the *Prussian*, and the *Lunenburgers*; either of these respective Powers severally considered, are able at any time to oppress and subdue the *Hamburgers*; and in this Case only the Parallel is not exact: But if any one of these Princes, as all in their Turn have, at any time attempt to Invade, Encroach upon, or Oppress the *Hamburgers*, they are certain of Aid from all the rest, as was particularly seen in the late Attempt made upon them by the King of *Denmark*: The Reason is also as plain as the Fact; there are none of these Princes and Powers but would be glad of this *Sweet Morsel* to be added to their Dominions, the Revenue of which is so considerable; but the Interest of all the rest forbid it, since it would immediately add too much to the Power of that Party that should possess; and this has all along been the Security of the *Hamburgers*. I might bring the Duke of *Savoy*, the *Swiss Cantons*, the City of *Geneva*, the Duke of *Tuscany*, and several other of the lesser Powers of *Europe*, to illustrate this, but I think 'tis needless; the Case of the City of *Strasbourg*'s being devour'd by the *French*, for want of the Neighbourhood of like Equality is a farther Confirmation of the matter.

If I prove that in like manner the discordant Interests of the *Dissenters* in *England* are equally in their Degree the Security of the Church of *England*; I mean as far concerns themselves, and the Churches Danger from them: I think I shall make good what I have undertaken, in as ample Manner as I have pretended, and I claim to be heard in that respect first.

The *Dissenters*, however, considered under one Denomination, are not, nor ever were in *England*, one United Body; they differ in Interest, as they discord in Opinion; the Charity they profess, even one for another, does not abound; they never acted by Concert in any one thing as I remember; nay, not universally, no not in the Revolution.

Impolitically enough for them, they keep no general Correspondence; they act in nothing as a Body; their Funds, General Provisions, both for their Ministry and their Poor, are as distinct from, and unconcern'd with one another, as theirs and the *Roman Catholics* are; their Principles in several

Respects differ as much one from another, as any of them do from the Church. In short, they are not a Body; they are a dispers'd Multitude, without Form, without Engagement, without Correspondence, and indeed without Agreement, I hope they are not without Charity one for another; and I think their own Sufferings may have taught them Moderation.

The present Circumstances of the *Dissenters* thus consider'd; pardon me, my Lords, if suppose, what I shall at any time join with a Prayer against, to be put in a Parenthesis, *GOD FORBID*; but I hope, for Argument-sake, I may be allow'd to suppose what may never come to pass, viz. That it was to be put to the *Dissenters* in *England* to chole a Successor to the Crown. -

I would leave it now to the worst Enemy the *Dissenters* have in *England* to determine, who can they imagine they would all agree to choose?

The *Dissenters*, as before, are chiefly divided into Four Sorts: Let us ring the Changes upon them a little; the *Presbyterian* would never agree it should be an *Independent*, for he was once toss'd out of the Saddle by him before, and the *Pure Divine* of *Presbytery* horridly maul'd by old *Milton*, in his scolding Epistles to the *Presbytery* of *Belfast* in *Ireland*. See *Col. Milton's Letters*, fol. 365. where the *Independents* reproaches him with as much Idolatry and Bigottry, as ever he did the Church, and his Government every jot as intollerable.

The *Independents* would no more vote for a *Presbyterian* King, for the same Reason; National Churches and Coertions being once intollerable to them, and directly contrary to their Profession of Gospel-Liberty.

Both these together would refuse an *Anabaptist*; who, if he was to Govern them, however moderate he might be as to Coertion, would however Esteem all those that refused to join in re-baptizing their adult Members, unqualified for; and at least refuse them their Communion.

These three would never agree to choose a *Quaker*; and, if they did, if he were true to his Profession, he could never agree to accept it; because he could not perform the Executive Part of Government, nor defend himself against the Breakers of the Publick Peace.

I hope

I hope none of these will take what I say here, as any Satyr upon them or their Principles; I am discoursing of them as they respect one another. I hope they are all four Christians, and regarding their several Professions; Religiously considered, I have nothing to say; but it is far from a Reflection, to say that in Civil Respects they can never correspond, or at least not so, as to be content to come under the Dominion of one another.

If the *Independent* were ask'd, Who will you have to Reign over you, a *Presbyterian* or a *Churchman*? He would Answer; We see little Difference, and think 'tis at least as well where it is; if the *Presbyterian* were ask'd the like of the *Independent*, he would say, rather where it is, for it would be worse.

The Alternative would be the same, in the Case of the *Anabaptist* and the *Presbyterian*, and still worse with the *Quaker*, and the *Presbyterian*.

Where then would the Choice lie, bring a *Church of England Man* to them, and put the Question to them all, only assuring them, he was a Man of Temper, Moderation and Charity, that hated Persecution as a thing Unnatural, against his Conscience, and against the Christian Religion in general; that would study the Peace of the Nation, and Maintain General Liberty; I think I may Appeal to the worst Enemy the Dissenters have, whether they would not Universally give their Votes for him?

In the next place, I think 'tis plain, that if this would not be their Choice, it must proceed from their being Blind to their own Interest; depriv'd of their Common Faculties, and having lost all their Politick Powers; and, Gentlemen, if they are all turn'd Fools or Mad Men, then you are in no Danger again on the other hand; for no Concert, no Union, no Confederacy can ever be form'd, to signify any thing among *Ideots*, or *Lunatics*.

It will be easily allow'd me, I find, that the *Dissenters*, generally speaking, would neither sort of them, come under the Scandal of Folly or Lunacy; and Abstracted from that, I believe I am not to be reprov'd, for saying, if it was in their Power to Chose a

King for this Nation, they would all agree he should be a *Moderate Churchman*; a *Church Man*, with his Senses in Exercise, Caudid and Christian in his Temper, and his Eyes open to the General Interest of *England*.

I allow, they would from the same Use of their Reason, except against a *High Churchman*, a Man of Fury and Heat; a Man that had no Government of himself, could never be qualify'd to Govern them; and a Thousand Reasons, which are too long to Repeat, would determine them another way; but they would all certainly join in Chosing a *Church of England King*.

If this be not allow'd me, I desire to have the Negative made probable, for more I do not demand; and if it be allow'd me, then I refer back to the Instance of the City of *Hamburg*; there lies the Security of the *Church of England*; the Discording Interests of the *Dissenters*, putting them out of a possibility of agreeing, which of them should Reign, most certainly determines them in the Interest of the Church.

They would doubtless all agree to have Liberty Establish'd by Law, and perhaps might most of them be more willing, to have their Liberty given by the Church, than they would be, to give it one another; but that once secur'd, and some few Demands as to Sacramental Tests, and the like; they would most certainly all of them agree, to have the Government in the hands of the Church.

I confess to me 'tis plain; 'tis the Interest of the *Dissenters*, to have the Government in the Hands of the *Church of England*, with a due Liberty; and I cannot wish for the *Dissenters* to see it otherwise; unless I saw them otherwise affected, one towards another: And if this be so——It brings me to the great Question.?

How then is it possible, the Church can be in any Danger from the *Dissenters*? Can they be likely to pull Down the Church, who, if it were left to their Choice, would put the Government into the hands of the Church, and whose Interest it is to have them always uppermost? 'tis a Contradiction in its self, and too Ridiculous to require any Answer.

I would

I would not double the Arguments, and fill an Address of this Nature, with Tautologies and Impertinence; it seems plain from hence, that the present Circumstances of the *Dissenters in England*, are so far from being Dangerous to the Church, that they really are the Churches Security; and 'tis Impossible it should be otherwise.

To say these Discording Interests may agree, as differing Interests fall in against a Common Enemy, is to say nothing; for the Probability lies directly against it, and the contrary has a Noted Example in the Late Civil Wars, Rebellion I should call it, or Mr. *Rehearjal* will be Angry.

The *Dissenters* had the Power by Conquest, they were not divided into separate Sects as now, but as interests did divide them, they immediately Clash'd, Pull'd one another to Peices, and the Effect naturally Revolv'd to a Restoration of the Church; and I am of the Opinion, it would be next to an Impossibility for any Man, to concert a Union among these four sorts, that would so please them, and make them easie in Matters of Government, like what they would find in the Church.

Where now is the Danger of the Church of *England*, from Protestant Dissenters? or what are you in Danger of! As to a Common Wealth, that Matter is quite worn threadbare, 'tis plain; not one *Dissenter* in a hundred, approves it, is as plain: They are all convinc'd, the Government of *England*, by a Limited Monarchy, is the best and most suited to the Genius, as well as Convenience of the *English* Nation; and when they did form a Common Wealth, they were forced to come to the Medium of a Single Administration.

Thus let the Argument be turn'd and twisted never so many ways, 'tis the same; there can be no real Danger of the Church or State from the Dissenters; all the Outcries of that Nature are meer Trick, State Policy, and empty Pretences without Ground or Signification; and I doubt not but they will in time appear so.

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